

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 OMB-01

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R 200348Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO USIA WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5963

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0150

USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:

SUBJECT: CLOSURE OF LAA; FUTURE USIS PROGRAM FOR LAOS

REF: A. STATE 001520-C, B. VIENTIANE 0122-L, C. VIENTIANE

0086-L, D. VIENTIANE 0070-L

1. EMBASSY ON JANUARY 16 RECEIVED FOLLOWING NOTE, DATED
PREVIOUS DAY, FROM MFA (NOTE NUMBER 56/AE.AP):

"THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF LAOS PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS TO THE EMBASSY
OF THE USA AND HAS THE HONOR TO INFORM THE EMBASSY THAT THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE PDRL HAS DECIDED TO DISSOLVE THE LAO-
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHED IN VIENTIANE IN 1956 AND TO
PROHIBIT ALL ITS ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY OF LAOS,
THIS WAS EFFECT FROM 5 JANUARY 1976.

"THE MFA WOULD, THEREFORE, BE VERY MUCH OBLIGED TO THE EMBASSY
OF THE USA FOR MEASURES WHICH IT (EMBASSY) WOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH
TO TAKE WITH A VIEW TO CONFORMING WITH THE AFORESAID DECISION."
(COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE.)

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2. IN FACT, LAA ON JANUARY 14 HAD VACATED ITS BUILDING AND

OBTUN RECEIPT FOR PROPERTY TURNED OVER TO PDRL, AFTER DIRECT DEALINGS WITH MINISTRY OF INFORMATION (REFS B AND C).

3. WE AGREE WITH POINT EXPRESSED REF A THAT IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE TO GET ON THE RECORD OUR POSITION WITH RESPECT TO FUTURE USIS PROGRAMS AND BELIEVE THAT A REPLY TO THIS NOTE FROM MFA WOULD CONSTITUTE GOOD OCCASION FOR SO DOING.

4. ACCORDINGLY, WE PROPOSE TO REPLY AS FOLLOWS:

"EMBASSY PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS, ETC., AND HAS THE HONOR TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE MINISTRY'S NOTE NUMBER 56/AE.AP OF JANUARY 15, 1976, CONCERNING THE DECISION OF THE PDRL TO DISSOLVE THE LAO-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION.

"THE EMBASSY REGRETS THAT THE PDRL FOUND IT NECESSARY TO TAKE SUCH ACTION WITH RESPECT TO AN EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION WHICH FOR ALMOST 20 YEARS HAD DEDICATED ITSELF TO STRENGTHENING THE BONDS OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE PEOPLES OF LAOS AND THE UNITED STATES. HOWEVER, THE EMBASSY DOES NOT QUESTION THE RIGHT OF THE PDRL TO ABOLISH ANY PRIVATE ORGANIZATION AND IS PLEASED TO INFORM THE MINISTRY THAT THE MODALITIES OF TERMINATION OF THE LAA WERE COMPLETED AMICABLY ON JANUARY 14 AS THE RESULT OF DIRECT DEALINGS BETWEEN THE STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION AND OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION. THERE IS ATTACHED A COPY OF THE RECEIPT ISSUED BY APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS OF THE MOI TO THE ASSOCIATION ON THAT DATE.

"THE EMBASSY WISHES TO CALL TO THE MINISTRY'S ATTENTION THE FACT THAT CERTAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION, SUCH AS THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH TO OFFICIALS OF THE LAO GOVERNMENT AND TO PRIVATE CITIZENS OF LAOS, WERE PARTIALLY SUBSIDIZED BY THE U.S. INFORMATION SERVICE, AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE EMBASSY OF THE USA. THE U.S. INFORMATION SERVICE MAY IN DUE COURSE WISH TO REINSTITUTE THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH, AND CERTAIN OTHER EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES ON WHICH IT FORMERLY COLLABORATED WITH THE LAA, AS PART OF THE CONTINUING PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES WHICH IT INTENDS TO CONDUCT ON THE SAME BASIS AS THE PROGRAMS OF SEVERAL OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN LAOS."

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(COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE.)

5. AS PRACTICAL MATTER, MISSION BELIEVES THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR OPENING ANY INFORMATION/CULTURAL FACILITY OUTSIDE THE EMBASSY AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT STATEMENT SUCH AS THAT PROPOSED ABOVE STRENGTHENS OUR POSITION IF AT SOME FUTURE TIME USIS CONSIDERED RE-OPENING OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CENTER WORTHWHILE AND DESIRABLE.

6. LAA CONSTITUTION PROVIDES FOR DISCUSSIONS ON DISPOSAL OF LAA PROPERTY BETWEEN AMBASSADOR AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR IN EVENT OF DISSOLUTION. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT PROPOSE TO BROACH THIS ISSUE BECAUSE TRANSFER OF PROPERTY HAS ALREADY BEEN COMPLETED ON SPEEDY AND SATISFACTORY BASIS; BECAUSE APART FROM BUILDING ITSELF (WHICH WAS ALWAYS TO REVERT TO LAO GOVERNMENT) AND A FEW SELECTED ITEMS WHICH WE WERE ABLE TO REMOVE WITHOUT DIFFICULTY, THE REMAINING PROPERTY TURNED OVER WAS OF LITTLE USE TO USIS OR REST OF MISSION; AND BECAUSE SUCH DISCUSSIONS COULD CONCEIVABLY LEAD INTO QUESTION OF LAA'S FINANCIAL RESERVES IN U.S. BANK ACCOUNT.
(SEPTTEL FOLLOWS ON THIS SUBJECT.)

7. ACTION REQUESTED: USIA/STATE CONCURRENCE/COMMENTS
ON PROPOSED REPLY TO MFA NOTE.
DAKS

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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